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SUBJECT
Ltr. Sub: Sourcefiles

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11 March 1964

[redacted] Chief

Tokyo Bureau, FBIS
APO 503
San Francisco, California 94100

Dear [redacted]

Subject: Sourcelines

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At long last I am able to break away from preoccupation with the ramifications of the Cyprus crisis long enough to respond to your 10 February 1964 letter on this subject. FYI, [redacted] is in Europe, visiting Vienna, Frankfurt, and London before returning here next week. He is delving into the longer-term implications and problems of the coverage shifts we have made thus far. I am therefore "off the hook" for the moment.

Your letter, of course, touches on the heart of the sourceline system of the formulations evolved from interpretation of the rules. It must be recognized that imperfections exist--either in terms of FBIS usage or, more likely, in terms of consumer understanding. The answers, however, are complex especially if the need to tailor to local problems is involved. We are, for example, grappling with an acute problem along these lines for Latin American sourcelines.

Replying to your specifics regarding NHK, however, I would seize on your "quasi-governmental" classification and urge handling of NHK under sourcelines per B-1, Official: "Broadcasts under the acknowledged control of a quasi-governmental or a semi-government corporation." It is difficult to construe how an international service could be official while broadcasts by the same corporation to domestic audiences could be non-official.

While we could accept Tokyo NHK Domestic Service, we feel we cannot accept initials for other broadcasters but must require the English translations: Tokyo, Tokyo Broadcasting System in Japanese.

As mentioned earlier, however, the sourcelines are still evolving. May I ask you to hang on for a while. When we next revise portions of the sourceline book--probably in conjunction with the Latin American problem--we shall take your views into account.

Very truly yours,

[redacted]
Chief, Field Operations Staff, FBIS

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FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE

TOKYO BUREAU

10 February 1964

[Redacted]
Chief, FOS, FBIS
P.O. Box 2604
Washington, D.C.

Dear [Redacted]

Subject: Sourcelines

Your recent reminder (WA 620) on Bureau editors' use of source-line for NHK-TV prompted a closer look at this matter. It has developed that the long-standing FBIS classification of NHK as "official" seems no longer accurate.

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NHK domestic services are believed to fall in the category described in paragraph C-1 of "Standard Sourcelines." The NHK handbook says, "NHK is neither state-operated nor semigovernmental in character." NHK officials insist that NHK policies are not determined by the Government despite subsidization and support through the license fee system. Supporting this claim, the Bureau has monitored NHK domestic broadcasts critical of the Government. NHK international broadcasts, however, which are dependent on direct Government fiscal support rather than a public fees system, appear to remain in line with Government policies. At best it is felt NHK might be classified quasi-governmental. Since for sourceline purposes this would remove it from the official category, the Bureau recommends NHK be treated in the "semi-official and private" category.

The Bureau further recommends that for purposes of clarity among several stations (and networks) with confusing names, the abbreviations by which they are commonly known be included in the sourceline. Since the English translations used in sourcelines are not used locally, there has been definite confusion among consumers as to the identity of local broadcast sources. In one embarrassing case the Chief of the Embassy's political section attributed to NHK an anti-American comment by the private station sourcelined "Japan Broadcasting System." Inclusion of the three initials NHK, NSB, NET, NTV or TBS will bring instant recognition among Japan hands and prevent mistaken conclusions.

Sincerely,

[Redacted]
Chief, Tokyo Bureau

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26 February 1964

BIS COMMENT:

Perhaps there will someday be a complete and accurate listing of all sourcelines that may be used by FBIS available to all editorial workers in FBIS as well as to each consumer of an FBIS product. In the meantime, we must do with what we can--consistent with our policy as it now is formulated.

If, for instance, many years ago the sourcelines had been incorporated into the program schedules, then the "city," "regional," "provincial," "home," and "international" or "external" designations would have been the standard applied to each program selected for monitoring and publication. Now there would not be the mounting concern on the part of many who do not exactly agree with the present policy of sourcelines.

has expressed a problem that appears purely local in scope. I fail to see how we can assign initials to the various broadcasters in Japan without taking more away from the consumer of the Daily Report.

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I also fail to see how we can remove the Domestic Service title from NHK monitored broadcasts. I therefore suggest that we use for NHK broadcasts the sourceline: "Tokyo NHK Domestic Service in Japanese." For the commercial Japanese broadcasters, we should use the name of the broadcaster in the sourceline. I do admit to a redundancy in the possible use of "Tokyo Tokyo Broadcasting System in Japanese," but we have to have English translations in the Daily Report, and I should not like to see the "TBS" added to this sourceline. Certainly, I would not like to see "Tokyo TBS in Japanese."

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Japan's NHK is modeled after the BBC in corporate structure, and I can imagine the cry that would go up from the London Bureau were we to take a BBC news bulletin on the "Home Program" and publish it as "London BBC Domestic Service in English." However, that is the sourceline that I would use, despite the howls of anguish.

The Tokyo Bureau recommends that the NHK broadcasts be classified as "semi-official and private" but the sourceline book points out that official broadcasts are those "under the acknowledged control of 'a quasi-governmental or semi-governmental corporation'" (page B-1) and the question therefore arises: is NHK official or not? Either they (NHK) are official or there are no Japanese 'official' broadcasts. It is quite hard to see how the International Service of Japan, which is controlled by NHK, is official and the broadcasts the same corporation transmits to the Japanese people at home are non-official.

The questions of other sourcelines are too numerous to take up here and now and comment has been asked only for the attached letter. However, the time is coming when the whole question of what FBIS has done to the sourcelines is going to be reexamined. I shall have a few hundred thousand words to contribute to the discussion.